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ABSTRACT

Fixation on technique, erosion of autonomous and community interests, and efforts to increase professionalization of adult education (which tends to emphasize the differences between adult educators and adult learners rather than their common interests) have created a crisis in adult education. Contemporary practice and research on self-directed learning have focused on teaching techniques. This has caused modern adult education to evade serious engagement with critical, ethical, and political issues. Adult educators must develop a sense of vocation or calling and must subordinate technique and technology to ethical and practical considerations through human-scale, less impersonal programming and development. This does not necessarily mean decreased emphasis on competent performance. The issues of needs assessment, program design, and program evaluation, professionalization, and educator training and competence should be approached from the perspective adult learners' needs rather than from the standpoint of bureaucratic or corporate needs. Adult educators should be guided by the principles of transformative pedagogy, which emphasizes social theories of action rather than psychological learning theories. Transformative education, which is based on engendering democratic social relations between adult educators and learners, may be extended to formal educational institutions, the workplace, and the community. (Contains 153 references.) (MN)

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